






Victoria
with regard & friendship
from Freeland

Fincastle,
Oct. 27, 1941.

THOUGHTS



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THOUGHTS

FROM THE WRITINGS OF

R. W. BARBOUR

FIFTH IMPRESSION

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

1925

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PREFATORY NOTE

THESE passages, selected from the Sermons, Letters, and Poems of R. W. Barbour, are necessarily fragmentary. They were originally collected that his friends might possess a permanent memorial of some of his favourite thoughts. As a desire has been expressed that they should reach a wider circle, they are now published.

EDINBURGH,

November 1900.

'Eṣ 'A eí

O STARS, that will rise and shine
For other eyes than mine,
When these are rapt with the radiance of
light divine ;
O stars, will ye tell of me true,
As I have spoken of you,
Will ye shine far brighter than stars unsung
could do ?

O night, who hast trusted me
Such secrets deep and free,
As told ye had spoken with others, ere I
with thee ;
Wilt pass from mind as sight,
Because it is written: No night ?
Will thy face lean forth from some glad-
somer gleam of light ?

O hills, that will catch the glow
When I'm in the Long-ago,
Will ye break yourselves open for other
hearts to know ?
Will one in the After say,
When the sunset's too fair for the day:
He is singing this scene on the hills that
are far away ?

LOVE. What shall we call it?
The root of roots, the seed of seeds, the sap of saps, the juice of juices. Love is first and last. When I have love, I have everything: without love I am nothing. Love is all faith, all hope. Love is like the earth—everything comes out of her, everything returns to her again. She is the mother and nurse of all the graces. What love is, it is hard to say: for those who have it, needless to tell; for those who have it not, impossible.

JOY. What is joy? Love awake and alive, fully conscious of herself. If love be the heart's first beat, joy is its counter-beat. If love be the outflow of the heart, joy is the inflow, the flowing back of the loving heart. The rise of temperature which love brings, the heightened being—the effervescence—that is joy.

PEACE is more than joy: it is love's latest boon, and her fairest. I hesitate to speak of it: I know so little what it is. One may have love in a measure, and joy many times, and yet be but a raw scholar in this art of peace. The speaker here, methinks, should be one far on in pilgrimage; or, if young in years, old and well-

stricken in grace. "Well-stricken," whether the rod have been heavy or light; weaned and quieted, like a child, from a child; or, though it "have burned the hair and bent the shoulders," still weaned and quieted. "Peace," what is it? It is what remains in the new heart when joy has subsided. Love, that is the new heart's action, its beat; joy its counter-beat, peace is the balance, the equilibrium of the heart, its even posture, its settled attitude. It is neither the tide going, nor the tide flowing, but the placid calm when the tide is full, and the soft sea-levels poise themselves and shine—poise themselves because there is such fullness within them; shine because there is so much serenity above them.

THE Christian life is a course of obedience. It is not merely a thing of understanding, or even of will, but also of willingness, which often means laying down one's will.

READ the sin against the Holy Ghost. What is it, do you ask? It is no one act, no particular form, no mysterious aspect of evil. It is just persistent indifference to doing wrong; persistent indifference to the warning, the entreating One. That is the sin which hath never forgiveness, for it may never stop, never ask for forgiveness. He that commits it is in danger of eternal sin—of sinning on and on forever.

THE mind's soil, like the earth's, is full of seeds that have never yet sprung up or borne fruit. Under changed conditions, under a visitation of trial, fresh surfaces may be exposed ; and strange, buried, but not mortified, forms of evil will appear.

NO, brothers, there is no fear of them that fear—of them that say that God is telling them more and more every day that they are sinners exceedingly. The fear is of those who think anything else, who say : “ We have no sin.”

HE does not *make* the Atone-ment as if He did that, instead of doing some other thing,

or as if He did that in the midst of doing other things, or as if He did it and ceased doing; or had done it, and had no further connection with what He had done. You cannot separate the thought of Propitiation, of Reconciliation between God and us, from *Himself*. He is, ever is, ever was, and ever shall be the Atonement which He once made. He pleads His own crucified person. His very redemptorial existence is His plea. He *is* all that He pleads, and He pleads every syllable and every iota of what He is for every one of His accused people. There is nothing else for Him to be, nothing else for Him to *do*, in the same essential sense in which He *is* the Propitiation for our sins.

REMOVE from us the protection, the encompassing safeguards and shelters we enjoy ; withdraw the influences for good that are daily and weekly dropt on us like gentle dew from heaven, and have dropt ever since we had any being ; deprive us of the comforts and interests, the innocent substitutes for forbidden pleasures ; expose us to the loneliness, the vacancy, the dreary monotony, the hopeless struggle, the despair in which the majority of the men and women who fall find themselves immersed ; and bring before us, thus exposed and bereft, what temptation you will—uncleanness, intemperance, theft, lying, blasphemy—and not one in ten of ordinary Christian people, I believe, would stand before it.

THE Scripture is just one detailed and heaped-up assertion: "There is sin." "Man," it says, "whoever thou art, thou hast sinned—whatever thou art, thou art a sinner." The very existence, nay, the outward form, of the Bible turns on this fact. "Man unfallen," that is the title of *two* pages of the Old Testament. "Man fallen," that is the heading of six hundred. If this is no fallen race, then there is no need for a special revelation; every man may be his own revealer; every man by searching may find out God for himself, every man be his own redeemer. It is a ruinous state of things which is the proper object and subject of such a revelation as we possess.

O HIGH grace of courtesy, O glorious virtue of consideration, how dost thou honour him that honours thee! What slave, girt with towel, and holding a basin, but is magnified and transfigured, if he wear thee! O ye would-be courtiers, who have fought for places next the King, learn wherein lies true royalty—what constitutes a King. But more than eyes that cannot look at defilement, and more than hands that cannot help but bring water to it, are here. Ay, it is the heart that comes out at the eyes, it is the heart that puts forth these hands. It is the condescension that most shines; the love of helping others; the bliss of being allowed to be useful; the desire of doing good. It is the sorrow at suffering; the gladness at rejoicing;

the wish to sit quiet beside the mourner, or move gently about a sufferer. It is the wise wistfulness of an eye, and the quick watchfulness of an ear, and the ready willingness of an arm. It is the happiness to have some one to serve, some errand to run, some post to fill, some position to keep. It is the joy to be ever at hand; the earnestness to be in the way. It is the doing all for another's sake, everything in another's name.

THE character, the divine grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, has so affected our eyes that they cannot at first sight catch the condescension, ay, the humiliation, ay, the even forbidding aspect of this office which He fills. His poverty hath

made all things about it so rich that, looked at in His presence, they shine with supernatural splendour. But wait till the first soiled foot comes in sight, and the office of the servant is asked at your hand, and the moment to strip and gird with the towel is come. And then, be it but to wait in the house to let another out ; to lose some pleasure to help somebody else ; to speak cheerfully in the morning or when others enter the room ; to be gracious, pitiful, courteous—be it but to help a child with his lessons, or hold an infant so that it will not cry ; to give a weak one an arm to lean on, a struggling one a hand to hold, a fighting one a cheer to inspire—be it but to pick a stone out of somebody's

path ; to remove by self-denial the temptation that will lead another to fall, the occasion that will bring an angry word ; to mention to a friend his fault by himself—be it but to go two steps with him who asks us to go one ; to spend ourselves for those whose company we gain little from ; to instil a little music into one whose existence is a monotone ; to visit somebody who is lonely, or sit by somebody who is sick—be it but to stand by one who is despised ; or quietly company with an outcast—be it but evening by evening to wash with gentle hands the dust and toil of the day from one another's souls—be it but to give someone a happy half-hour to enrich his life, or lighten his burden—ah, how hard it is,

but how blessed! What humble work, but how fit for Apostles, how fit for Christ!

HERE is another test of true discipleship. What is our attitude in worship here or at home? Is there anything that seems to draw our thoughts right up to Christ in prayer—or do they wander round by other people, other things? Is prayer to God a straight line, or is it a roundabout with all sorts of stopping-places by the way? When I hear a sermon, can I, do I, strive to disengage myself from everyone else, even the person sitting by me? Then I may go to Christ's table, for I am His friend.

AS for the last great pilgrimage, so for every stretch of this, we need a new grasp of Christ's hand, another mouthful of His mercy. Do we hear this voice, we, who know some points on the path before us—and are afraid of them? A rough place we shall probably have to pass, some difficulty we shall have to come through or some dear one will have to pass—some serious step we shall have to take. My brother, my sister, Christ knows it too. "He knoweth the way that I take." For He made the road, and travelled it. He made me for it, and He will travel it together with me. "Arise," He says at the table here, "and eat, for the journey is too great for thee."

TO say "God loved" is to say that He was Himself, that God was God. For God is love. Wherever love is, there God is; whatever doctrine dwells in that region dwells in God, and God in it. Whatever truth has most of love in it has most of God; for God is love.

"GOD loved the world": how hearts have understood it, who have never yet understood what "God created the world," or "God will judge the world," means! It comes to us of itself, like the sun after clouds and rain. You need not lift your head and look to say "It shines." "God loved the world": what merit is

there in understanding that?—yet what an unspeakable mercy it has been to many!

AT every step of Christ's life He let loose another secret of God's love. All God's love is in Christ. Think of every act, every event, every incident from His cradle to His grave, and you will find the Father's love stealing out somewhere.

In that endless round of good doing, see the *length* of it; in the sorrows of Gethsemane, see the *depth* of it; in the glories of the Mount of Transfiguration, see the *height* of it. Think of Jesus' life as one incessant, unrestrained, fathomless and trackless measur-

ing out of God's love to men,
telling it out long, broad, deep,
and high.

GOD'S love must be measured
by the whole work of Christ.
Never did God so truly give as at
that awful hour of isolation and
of desolation, when the two seemed
separated and the orphan's cry
went up, "My God!" If there be
any explanation of that infinitely
unspeakable cry, it is this: "Art
Thou welcoming all these, O Father,
and art Thou forsaking Me?" The
moment of forsaking for Him was
the moment of adoption for the
whole family of God in Him. In
the shadow of a redeemed earth
Jesus the Son of God spent that
hour of desertion.

CHRIST promised and Christ appearing are the greatest measure of God's love ; but Christ possessed by faith is also its measure. It is not more true that it was of God's love Christ came than that it is of God's love that we believed. God's love in Christ is given in a form for each man himself to measure it. Man's measure for God's love is *faith*. Faith is before love for man, but it is the child of God's love ; and when laid hold of, it travels God-ward again, bearing with it the flower of human character—love.

THE Bible is, indeed, simple enough for the simple, but it is also unfathomably deep. No

book takes such an entire sweep of all that affects and interests man. No book begins so low or ends so high. The most tainted being, whose face is one plague-spot from brow to chin, gets a new knowledge of himself here, not with the contaminating knowledge of curiosity but with the healing and hallowing knowledge of repentance. And the most holy saint, the face that seems to its fellows already radiant with the beatific vision, looks in and says, "Hush! for I see something higher, holier still."

DOST thou hear this, new heart, sorely plagued by the old? Courage! Canst thou believe it, the battle is not to be

forever. Thou fightest not without result. Some day, as surely as thou sittest and criest to thyself there, as surely as thou *art* the new heart, born on a day thou hast the date of, not the old, known by thy hatred and vexation at the old, ONE DAY THOU SHALT BE MADE FREE.

THERE is no exorcist of fear like love. Longing for the good of another will carry one through fire and water.

THIS is what the Incarnation is for: it is for the Atonement. This is emphatically the one thing Christ came into the world to do: to

die. No doubt He came to serve other ends as well. He came to reveal the Father; He came to restore the image in man; He came to live the perfect life, to set the peerless example; He came to found the highest, closest, widest brotherhood among mankind; He came to wind up the tangled skein of this painful earth. But none of these can it be said He came to do in the sense in which He came to die; or rather these other subordinate ends were only accomplished by the fulfilment of this primary one.

HOW is the Father known? Remove the Cross, and how are God and man brought into harmony, reconciled? Remove the Cross.

and where is the goal at once and the grand starting-point to the Imitation of Christ? Remove the Cross, and where is the very nerve and nexus of the new membership? Remove the Cross, and where is the promise of perfected Salvation?

O THESE words "ought" and "ought not," "right" and "wrong"—how often men, how often we ourselves, would fain have banished them from the dictionary! Thank God they are not man-made words, and therefore cannot be man-changed. They shine aloft like stars. They are written—as David indicates in that glorious twin song of nature and human nature—they are written

with the same ink that catalogues the stars; they are His sign-manual who hung these nightly seals. Rightly seeing one of them, seeing how the moral world lay behind the material:

“Thou dost protect the stars from wrong,
And the most ancient heavens by Thee
are fresh and strong.”

My brother, when next the tempter says “Transgress,” “Do the forbidden,” “Touch the accursed,” “Handle the pitch-stained thing,” wilt thou not say, “Dost thou bid me pluck the planets from their courses, cover the spangled heavens with sackcloth? Bid me as soon pull the strong firmament down. How can I do this GREAT, because abnormal, thing?”

SALVATION is child's play, if you will but be the child. It is because we are so strong, that the Almighty can do nothing for us. It is because we struggle so, that we cannot feel beneath us the everlasting arms. If we have not been lifted and carried, it is because we have never lain still, saying, "Take me."

DO you ask: "Am I Christ's servant?" I ask: "Is He loosing these bonds? Is your heart growing? Has it got any larger? Does it take more in than it did? Do you pray more for others? Do you give more time to them? Do you speak more to them than you did? Is it less hard to give Him a thought than it has been? Do you

think you have His mind about your life more than you used to? Have you ever thought what He thinks about it? Are the distance and dislike growing less and less, the love and nearness greater and greater?" Then you are His servant; then you are loyally and freely rendering yourself to Him; for He is loosening your bonds.

IT is the noblest part of our nature—this loyalty to what is over and above us. Let us believe in it, for it is a faith which saves—this sovereignty of what is better and purer than ourselves. There is no victory over the lower, but by gazing at the higher; there is no security for past conquests but to surpass them and go higher still.

WE have not even the power to give ourselves to Christ; our faces are turned to the earth; and all the weight of old sin, and all the present and predominant weight of evil, keep us down. But Christ says: "Thou art loosed." And not all the inability and inaction of years can check the incoming, the glorious inflow and energy, of these divine forces which follow on His word. And not all the charges and accusations, the liabilities and bad debts of our own black past, can keep their colour, or help fading away in an instant in the face of His abundant merit and most adequate discharge. And not all the iron rights, the ugly fetters of our enemy, can hold us back from leaping forth at the most masterly invitation of that voice.

With one burst of new strength, with one passionate outpouring of pent-up gratitude, with one deep and devout utterance of self-dedication, we are at His blessed feet, saying, "O Lord, I am Thy servant—Thou hast loosed my bonds."

EACH of us has his day, and his day's *end*. There are twelve hours in the day for each of us, says Jesus. The call will not come for us till twelve o'clock. But it may be further on in the day for some of us than we think. We have been counting the hours, and we think it is so-and-so. One of us is young: he thinks he has only heard it strike the hour to be stirring; it is about time to rise, to rise and be

beginning life. Another is in his full strength; it sounds to him somewhere about midday; a good part of life is gone, but not all, by any means. Another is on the slope of age; he knows it cannot be very long. We may not be out of our reckoning; God would not have us fill our minds with mere fancies or disabling fears. Counting days, He says, is no good, unless it leads us to give our hearts to wisdom. But—did we not waken when the clock struck the other day, and count and count, and reckon what time it was, and rise and find we had reckoned wrong? The clock had been *striking before we wakened*. Let us ask ourselves: What time was running before I began to listen?

THE sense of God's presence brings with it the desire, the right, the power, to approach the throne of grace at any time, for anything, about anyone. The more God's nearness is enjoyed, the oftener can He be gone to. No holy place need prepare one, no service-book need prompt one. No priest need lead one, no saint or angel intercede for one. The "assurance of God's love" is the great atmosphere, the charter, and the exemplar of believing prayer. One answered prayer is a greater proof of God's presence than many apologies. God's presence realised makes one as sensitive and tender to others' needs as to his own. No one can be near God and not desire forgiveness for his brother as well as himself. And God's felt

presence—which is assurance—brings not only the desire for this, but strong confidence in asking it. “The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Little do some Christians consider what they owe to the intercessions of others.

HAS the love of Christ worked any real change in our feelings towards God? has there broken out yet in our hearts the beautiful bright spring of thankfulness, or the deep fount of holy sorrow? Have we ever felt the promptings of remorse, the pangs of penitence, as we thought on the goodness of God in giving us Jesus Christ? . . . Has the goodness of the Lord ever got a hold of our hand and turned us right round, and begun to lead us

gently along the road that ends in a new mind about God, a mind at peace with Him?

That is what God's goodness leads to. If you have not seen the sunshine streaming down that lane, the sun has never shone for you. If you have never heard that in the patter of the rain, it has yet to fall a new way for you. If the sweetest voice you ever heard on earth never sounds in that strain, there is a music in it yet for you. If your father's wisdom, your teacher's help, your friend's love have not pointed out this track, there is a meaning in them hitherto missed by you. Oh, never say you have known the goodness of God as it can be known, as He would have it known, if it does not sometimes make you bow your

head in your prayer and stop speechless, and nearly break your heart. Speak not of God's goodness if it has not cast you at the feet of Christ, if it has not made you feel after and find the hem of His garment and hold on for dear life.

IF we were hungering after God, every raven's morning-call would have a lesson for us; if we were desiring Christ's righteousness, every flower would be a Sermon on the Mount, pointing us to the well-clothed lilies. If we were seeking a better country, every bird of passage's flight would be full of meaning. If we were more sensitive to God's law, dead stones, dead trees, felled logs, even worms of

the dust, would speak lessons of judgment to us. If we were trying to follow Jesus, a flock of sheep could hardly pass us on the road and not leave a lesson. If we were bent on studying our own hearts, these red dawns and sunsets would not always fade, and we be as ignorant of our soul's sky as ever.

GET Christ, and human love expands in all its features. Get Him, and the satyrs and owls are scared off like the night's shadows before the rising sun. Get Him, and the difficult resolves, and self-denying ordinances, and responsibilities of opening life, are disarmed and transfigured into so many worshipful squires and pages to the liege

lord. Ay, and whatever I have felt in manhood, of the broad and steady flowing of the rivers of duty and work and truth, ay, of the outbursting of old streams again, in a second youth ; whatever of more abundant sap mounts up the limbs with each revolving year, it is Christ floods every channel, Christ fills every vein.

MUCH good is done by persons of great energy, but as much by persons of sweet will. For energy is at times in danger of provoking opposition ; but gentleness wins upon its object unawares. Hence Peter calls it "an ornament," something that makes you wish one like it. Even as the myriad grains

of dust, invisible, issuing from plants or flowers in bloom, it insinuates and instils itself into the inward sense; the soul uncloses, not contracts, at its approach to receive it. Blessed are the meek; they can do what they will with us; for it is not their will they do, but that of One above them.

STILL, when Christ meets us, our consciences begin to speak. What was only a faint suspicion, an unpleasant possibility, suddenly becomes a great unyielding reality. There was something that nettled us when the things of God came too near—a distaste, a discomfort, an alarm. There was something in us that tried to get

its lips opened and answer. When we heard men plead for Him, something spoke with them and said, "That is true." But neither of these feelings was enough, till one day Jesus came, and stood up behind each of our sins, and said of every one of them: "That was aimed at *Me*"; "That was stolen from *Me*"; "My compassion bore that, and My patience, and My love." To say that, is to salute Christ with the conscience. And nothing can compel the salutation except the personal presence of Christ. No man with his conscience can call Jesus Lord, except the Spirit of Jesus be present to prompt, to inspire such a greeting.

“**W**HAT shall I do to serve Thee?” That is the voice of eagerness, of empty hands, eager to be filled with work ; of unemployed feet, a-tiptoe to be off on an errand. “What shall I do?” Has that cry come out of us? The spontaneous, glad, exhilarating desire to serve? Do we not too sorrowfully often estimate the worth of Christianity at what it will give us ; or, lower still, at what it will help us to escape from? Is there not too little of this generous offer of one-self to Jesus Christ for very love of Him, because He alone is worthy of our love?

IT is a calumny upon the Christian faith to say that it is mere self-abnegation ; that it paralyses part of

man's nature ; that it hampers effort and reduces all men to a dead level, and makes it indifferent what we are and whereunto we attain. It is, indeed, a losing of oneself, but in the very act it is a finding it—not losing it here and finding it only hereafter, but losing it and finding it here and now.

THE Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world—this is a sight ; it is not a truth. It is a thing that comes with the suddenness and assurance of an immediate perception. It is no statement about things, no proposition equally true for all reasonable beings. It is an individual act, which puts one in contact with a view, an object, so

that you are directly sensible of it and must say: "I see it, I feel it." It may not be quite the same to you as to me; perhaps no two of us see an object quite similarly, but there is *something there*. You may see nothing. If so, I cannot tell you about it. I can only say, as John did one day, "Behold the Lamb of God"; and again the next day, "Behold the Lamb of God." The simplest souls can see it, though they can never give a theory of it. And what they see they can bid others see. Wherever an eye turns upward in utter weariness, wherever a face looks forth in restless, unsatisfied longing, there for *it* is this sight: God's Lamb bearing away the sin of the world.

IN God's presence sin gets an infinite significance.

PLODDING, commonplace workman though Patience seem, hers is a work that, will we let it, comes to a wonder of perfection. There is an air about things her hand has been on that is as unmistakable as it is indescribable. Not to sudden and bold strokes does the marble owe its utmost perfectness. No, but to the silent, oft-repeated passages of the chisel over the stone, little more than audible in the occurrence, almost imperceptible in the separate result,—it is these that leave the statue a marvel and a desire. Let us “run with patience.”

ONLY goodness can see goodness, only spiritual minds can read spiritual, only faith can detect faith. Barnabas saw himself mirrored in Saul ; only—and this is the sign and sacrament of friendship—it was himself with “self” lost sight of. So long as we fear another, or so long as we look askance on him, we can have no communion with him. That only comes to friendliness, to love.

“THE child is father of the man,” and what made the full-grown man thrill must have thrilled the child Saul. I believe no man ever became poet or public speaker who had not such moments when a child, moments as full of unsearchable longings, or sublime

triumph (when he reached after, ay, and touched, as high and ineffable things) as ever in after years. These are part of one's eternal childhood, symptoms and signs that this earthly estate is but an ante-room to a heavenly maturity. These are not those childish things which the grown Paul has to put away. They are a possession for ever (*κτηῖμα ἐς αἰεί*). Blessed is the childhood which is stored with these inspirations, those pure and holy visions, which all can have, and none can take away. Whatever we give the children, let us give them this; whatever they want, let them not want this. The best education, the subtlest technical training, the happiest opening in life, may never be rewarded with success. This always will.

OPPPOSITION is not the worst condition of Christian, any more than of other activity ; it need not be an unhealthy condition. It is often an indication of reviving life. At any rate, it is better than utter indifference and death.

HAPPY he who at the day's end can say, "I have done something to-day." The heathen poet sings: "A master-life that man must live, and joyous, who can justly say at fall of each successive eve, 'I have lived to-day.'" He said it of a life of pleasure, but it is thrice as truly said of a life of duty. And not unworthily of the theme has a Christian man sung in our times—

"Duty done is the soul's fireside,
Blest who keeps that ingle wide."

And such "duty," as another sings, "is a path that all may tread." The ordinary day's work is honoured and sanctified by it. . . . And surely still more true is it of some piece of work done for Christ's sake and Christ's only. To have seen a fallen brother regain his feet ; to have trained a little child ; to have watched a sick one through to the end ; above all, to have stood by and prayed and spoken while a soul passed out of darkness into light—that is a consummation, a fact accomplished, over which too many praises can never be sung.

THE nearer one gets to God, the more good one can and will do for his fellow-men.

MEN are not lost by masses, or by families, or in churchfuls. Neither are they saved. No, but one by one, man by man. It is a strait gate ; John Bunyan spoke well when he called it a wicket gate, at which only one can go in at once, which each must pass for himself. It was this truth which, above all the truths Christ taught men, was new and true—the worth of the individual soul. Weigh worlds against that, He says, and they are lightness itself. What in heaven or earth, asked He who knew both to the bottom, can one exchange for his soul? What profit to have gained worlds if one have lost that? Profit?—say, rather, pure loss! We cannot value other lives until we have set a price on our own. A man's estimate of himself is

infallibly his standard in estimating others. How can we hear the cry of others' need if we have never heard our own?

WANT is a mighty leveller;
sorrow a strange peace-
maker; death a great reconciler.

ST. LUKE'S story leaves Lydia in the place where every woman's life should be at its best—in her home. Lydia the hostess is perhaps the highest type of Christian woman. Her own table ought to be her highest place of honour; the family is her throne. What she is there, society will be in her time, and in the after-time. Every woman ought to covet the title of lady in its old acceptance—"bread-

giver"—to her own folk first, and then to strangers.

LYDIA'S sanctified womanhood shone out in another and a characteristic form. "If ye have judged me to be a true believer," she said, "come into my house, and abide there." Her faith began to work at once. Joining the church for her meant having something to do, something to give. Her heart had been opened, her house must be too. Her life had been dedicated to Christ; so must her home.

SIN is just madness, falsehood, being beside yourself. No man if he fully understood himself, if he took everything into account,

if he looked at God and at his own nature—what he was made for—and at the judgment-day, could sin. Sin is always something out of sight; and when we yield to it, we have forgotten our own true selves. We begin to live a life in which we despise ourselves. There is a sense of a deep, deep division between us and it. At last we begin to doubt which is the real man—the man that rebukes or the man that runs riot. Such is the madness of sin.

HAVE your lives been touched by a higher power? has there been a new birth in them, a birth from above? Have your hearts been caught, have they enkindled with a consecrating fire? have they been loosed and enlarged and drawn

upward in prayer? have they been led along by an unseen love? Have your eyes been opened upon a new world both within and above and before? Is there anything in your experience that might not have come out of your *own* spirit; that could not be accounted for by the influence of others upon you; that must therefore be ascribed to a special influence, not human, but divine?

J OY is a most contagious, catching thing. But of all joys, joy in the midst of trouble. Nothing more wins men to the Gospel of Christ than the witness of a bright life; and that witness we have all of us within our power to bear. Nothing persuades the world of the reality of religion more than the deep

rest it brings to the believing heart. A mind at perfect peace—that is the mystery of Christian living, that is the secret of communion with God. But this strange, inward power is most clearly perceived in the midst of distress. Men cannot fathom it; human nature cannot furnish it. It is no worldly stoicism crushing down the natural impulses of the heart. It is a divine thing to “glory in tribulations”; to feel the power of Christ resting upon you, raising you above yourself, turning your very weakness to strength.

HE will never truly repent the shadow he has cast on another's life who has not first agonised over the blackness of his own.

NO one can be awakened without feeling in a large measure alone. That is what vital religion means; it is getting alone with God. It is getting a sight of one's sins as done against Him, and Him only. It is getting under the power of the world to come. It is feeling as we shall feel when we stand, each for himself, at the bar of God. He who has thus gone within himself, who has entered into the chamber of his soul and shut-to the door and gone down on the knees of his heart and humbled himself before God—to him God has surely spoken, to him God has granted salvation. But he who always lives in others' eyes and dwells in others' opinion and feeds on others' praises,—to him the Gospel

is not, and cannot be, the power of God unto salvation.

THERE is no more moving sight than a strong man in tears. Only the strong can truly weep. Tears are then the overflow of the heart. They come when words are powerless ; they go where deeds cannot follow. They are the speech of souls past speaking.

THE sufferings of Christ were altogether distinct from ours. We suffer, knowing that we have deserved more than we can ever bear. He suffered, knowing that He had deserved nothing. We suffer for others' sin, knowing that even in

our purest experience we have some sympathy with sin. He suffered, conscious of no such sympathy. Many a martyr, following his Lord's example, has gone to as bitter a physical death as his Lord, singing as he went. Jesus went to His death, shrinking and sore amazed, and in a horror of fear before it. It was the burden He bore there that broke Him down. It was your sins and mine that bowed Him as they never bowed, never can bow us down. He was "made sin *for us*." "This is My body broken *for you*." "The Son of Man giveth His life *instead of many*." "By His stripes we are healed." "The chastisement of *our peace* was laid upon *Him*." "*We all* like sheep had gone astray; we

had turned *every* one to his *own* way," and "the Lord hath *laid on Him* the iniquity of us all." That is what takes the sting and curse out of life for me. That uproots the weed; that repairs the breach; that sweetens the sour. The fact that there are thistles in this world of God's, and that they have to be taken out of it, is not so difficult to understand when a pierced hand has been pulling up thistles in the heart's acre.

POOR work is a special reproach to Christ's people. It is a sin against our Lord's life. He was a child of toil, and every indolent person who professes to follow Him is a contradiction. The

lad who is not learning some honest trade or profession, the girl who is not brought up to useful service (who cannot mend neatly, or cleverly kindle a fire), is not receiving a Christian training. Again, sloth or carelessness is a sin against our Lord's death. We profess if we are Christ's people to have been bought with a price—bodies as well as souls, the work as well as the worship of us. Are there any evidences of redemption in our daily employment? Are our everyday lives actually being redeemed from slovenliness and neglect? Poor work is a sin against the promised presence of Christ with us in our work, His indwelling by the Holy Ghost. How can we say He is helping us if we are letting

things lie? How can we pretend to communion with Him in the midst of deserted duties, or unfulfilled engagements, in a dirty house or in an untidy room? If Christ came to call us, would He find our lives always in a confusion, our work always behind? Would that that could be said of us which was said of John Wesley in the later years of his life, that if his Master had come at any moment, He would have found his notebook empty, his accounts clear, his work done.

THE Lord's Day was observed as a remembrance of the Risen Lord. Its observance is a direct testimony to the greatest fact

of the Gospel—the Resurrection ; and to one of the chief doctrines of our faith—Christ's Divinity. If it was not His day, the day He had for ever purchased and baptized to Himself by rising again from the dead, Christianity had no foundation, forgiveness no security, “men's faith was vain, they were yet in their sins.” . . . It was a point of personal loyalty to Christ to keep it. It was one great way of showing love and worship to their Redeemer. It was not a command so much as a privilege. They did not ask, “What shall I lose by keeping it?” but, “What may I not miss by neglecting it?” Is this our attitude to the Lord's Day? Is it a day of personal gratitude to One who gave Himself for me? You

keep your friend's birthday, you think of him, send messages and presents to him. Have you no thoughts, words, gifts for Christ on His birthday? You ask for ways of showing Him love, of letting it be known that you are His. Here is one. Show Him your love by dedicating to Him this day.

WHAT is the best thing a man can leave, be he the least or the greatest, as a legacy to his fellows, when he goes? Just this—*his example*. Words apart from this are worthless; they will not last. When he comes to make his parting speech, be it on a public platform or on a lonely sick-bed,

this is the last word he will have to say, it will be said for him—what he has been. That, and that only, will be his monument, whether it be the stately pillar over an honourable, unselfish, Christ-like life, or the heap of stones over a life of indulgence, and disgrace, and ruin.

THERE is nothing half so catching as joy, nothing so inimitable and surprising as steady sustained gladness. Men say, "There must be springs in such a life!" "That greenness could not be without roots somewhere!" Listen to Paul: "In everything, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known unto God." "In everything give thanks."

"Be ye thankful." "Whatever ye do, give thanks to God the Father, through the Lord Jesus."

THERE is no end to the service of Christ. All things, says a German Proverb, go out but God's will. And serving Christ is doing such a will. What bonds does not Christ's service loose?

It opens the whole earth to you. Nothing can happen there that is not your interest, not the affair of your Father's kingdom. It stretches before you—an endless horizon. Nothing can ever happen which is not in His plan. No man ever wants matter for study if he is truly Christ's servant. The very flowers he has a right to which none

other has. He has a new soul for beauty, a new eye for everything. Bonds have been loosed off all his mind. He is a new creature.

HE who has not felt what *sin* is in the Old Testament, knows little what *grace* is in the New. He who has not trembled in Moses, and wept in David, and wondered in Isaiah, will rejoice little in Matthew, rest little in John. He who has not suffered under the Law will scarcely hear the glad sound of the Gospel. He who has not been awakened under the mountain will be little delighted with the cross.

“TO bind up that which is broken,” that plainly means to guide the bereaved and heart-sore to the great Comforter. No command, I think, carries more humiliation to a minister's heart than this, “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.” To go to the house of mourning with a heart of stone; to become almost as familiar with death as with life; to sit beside the bereaved and feel as hard as iron; to see even a strong man shaken like a child, and be unmoved; or worse, to find yourself uttering words that would be worse than wounds, if they came to oneself in the air—these are things that are enough to make one cry for the shepherd heart, ay, almost

to despair of ever having it at all. Now, there is no cure for this evil but to seek a substitute for it—its opposite, viz. *devotion*. Nothing can save one from that indifference, which is the chrysalis of selfishness, but some heartfelt longing after souls. There is a twofold description of this characteristic of the true shepherd given by Ezekiel, viz. “to strengthen that which is sick,” and “bind up that which is broken.” To “strengthen that which is sick”: that simply means to lead the sin-smitten to the great Healer—a gracious office, but, ah! how hard to fill! To be ever at hand to such; to keep the door open, not to drive them away; to have the firm yet gentle touch; to sympathise

with the sinful, yet abhor the sin; to gain the benediction of the merciful, yet not to lose the blessing of the pure; to be severe as the Law, yet tender as the Gospel—*there is a whole physician's art*, that asks some mastery of spiritual diagnosis. Who that has tried it but knows what it is to be stricken absolutely dumb at the trial?

THOUGH an idol is "nothing in the world" (1 Cor. viii. 4), there is nothing in the world more real than idolatry. Putting something else in God's place, making a God of something else than God—that is a very real transaction.

JOY is a most infectious thing: it spreads of itself, and catches. Happy natures loosen burdens wherever they go.

THE Lord's Supper is something more than a "sign," a picture setting forth certain facts and truths so that everyone may see them. It is also a "seal," a personal pledge and token of understanding between Christ and the Christian heart. It is a particular stamp and plain handmark set down on the offer of Jesus in the Word. As a seal it has, no doubt, also a public side. The seal may be worn as a ring on the finger (in the East, on the arm) as well as against the heart (Cant. viii. 6), telling every one that the wearer has received

it. Coming to the Lord's Supper is a badge and profession of following Christ, as truly as wearing scarlet is a badge of being in the Queen's service. Anyone who cares to look can see the red mark on the letter of invitation which you carry in your hand as you go to the Table. But the seal has a private and secret side. Anyone may *see* the seal on the letter; no one may break it and tell the contents but the receiver; anyone may see the ring on your finger, but none but the wearer can say what attachment it conveys, or whether there is any attachment conveyed at all.

THE time of celebrating the
Lord's Supper is a time for

self-examination. "Let a man examine himself, and so (self-examined) let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Cor. xi. 28). Take the fiftieth Psalm, and pray God, the very God who spoke it, to speak it again. Or take the lists of sins in the sixth chapter of 1st Corinthians, or the fourth and fifth chapters of Ephesians, and look with your eyes open into that mirror for the reflection of your own countenance, as you would look into the glass when the pestilence was among us to see whether the plague-spot, the pale emblem of coming death, were in your face. Scan yourself by yourself there with the same earnestness and anxiety as you would in your secret chamber when the physician had gone down the steps after tell-

ing you that he had found signs of a trouble past human cure. Say, "Lord God of truth, let me know the truth; Lord God of judgment, judge me here and now. I will not stir from this place, I will not pass from this season, till I have Thy verdict."

CHRISTIAN life means a walking; it goes by steps. There is a straight fence run for us between right and wrong. There is no "sitting" on that "fence." No; only walking, one side or other. You can hardly look *across* without stepping *through*.

DID you ever hear his whisper who offered you the pleasant bread of temptation when God had bidden you tread the lonely wilderness of self-denial, with its hard stones and heart-emptying hunger? Why forbid yourself one harmless indulgence? What harm will it do? Be a little kinder to yourself. You need not give up the spirit in order to mind the flesh a little. The bread will help you over the stones. Stop cutting off that right hand; at least leave three fingers on it; do not maim yourself; you can have the hand and the Kingdom. Cease plucking out that right eye; you can close it at times, and at times use it. Do not cut off that right foot; tread lightly with it; that is all.

Did you ever heed that voice of the Tempter? Did you ever take the matter into consideration instead of felling him with a pebble from the brook of God, the divine Word? Ah me, for the saints of God who are pinioned and powerless, because of some secret compact with the adversary of souls; the redeemed of the Lord who are bondsmen because they allow themselves some little gratification about which they are not sure, about which they cannot be happy!

THE only schooling to fit us for further opportunity is found in instant and unintermitting performance of present duty. No paralysis is more dangerous and fatal than procrastination. And there is a

procrastination which calls itself prudence. No disease is more often the death of earnest purpose than a continual questioning what is to come next. The promise of the future often lies concealed in the promptings of the moment. It is to those who hold themselves erect, on the alert, that light first rises in the darkness.

IN Jesus, all God's commandments, as well as all His promises, are become Yea and Amen. Hence while the old economy was one of restrictions, the new is one of inspirations; while the old was a thing of confinement and bondage, the new is a thing of enlargement and liberty.

IT is not distinction, it is devotion that makes a good Christian. Not to write our name high, but to keep His Name holy and His honour bright, is asked of apostles and of us.

IT is personal influence that determines the size of a life; not words, or even deeds.

HAVE we never felt our lips sealed towards another, fallen into trouble, through past neglect of him when he was doing as usual? Has the word of comfort or reproof never stuck in your throat, when the moment for saying it came, because your heart had not been opened before as it ought to have been?

Interest is sadly lame that begins so late, that wakens only when the cry of anguish has arisen, or the more difficult dumb stupor of grief has set in.

There is no more precious gift to get than human trust, no gift more holy. But it is a plant as tender as it is rare. It is not a thing which springs up in a night ; and where it springs it needs watering and watching. There is no real affection without self-sacrifice. There is no true love that is not "watered aye with tears."

NOTHING teaches true knowledge of men unless love. There is no real understanding without real sympathy. For the real man is the deepest and highest in

man. A life is to be measured by its supreme moments ; a character by its commanding traits. If you think to gauge men by reckoning them at their lowest, or even at their ordinary, you will be wrong in the results. And this highest, this deepest, unlocks itself only to love.

LET us pray and command ; let us also live and shine. Precepts are necessary, but the incarnation of principle is indispensable. Are we often at a loss to enjoin ? Are we not often at fault how to behave ? God will find a medium for the influence, the utterance for the solicitude, the surface for the example. He has an interest in finding them—that is His concern. But

the influence, and the solicitude, and the example, these are ours, and they are indispensable. Next to the direct action of God's Spirit, the most available and potent force that operates on earth is the force of *Imitation*, and it is the most natural line along which the Holy Spirit will work. Nothing points to the pole of true and right but it draws other things that way. And if we seek it, it is promised that even as the parent cries, struggles, perseveres, and conquers—cry, struggle, persevere, and conquer the child shall too.

THERE is nothing incalculable in this world except the force of God's Spirit acting in a free will.

IS God's presence a practical power in our lives? Does it ever try a fall with some strong sin and come off conqueror? Is it a principle of life for us? Does it come into our calculations and rule our estimate of things? Does it rise within us ever like a fountain of fresh force when we find ourselves near one in need of help? Does it sometimes surprise us with its suddenness of assistance, its strange opportunity of aid? Does it fill our future for us? Is life for us a growing experience of getting to know God? Does His presence subdue our hopes and pacify our fears? Does it rule our action toward others? Does it ever lower the lifted arm or arrest the hasty judgment? Is God's will a reality? Does our will ever give way

to it? Are we seeing our lives grow like it? Are we getting clearer and clearer sights of it, and more and more strength to *do* it, when it is seen?

FAITH is nothing in itself. It is its object which is everything. It is just the opening of the soul which lets in God.

IT needs not great gifts of intellect or action; it only needs simple, unquestioning loyalty to catch as on a clear mirror the entire outline of Christ's character and life. This was what the Apostles caught, and Christ was never weary of teaching

them to catch, until after the Resurrection He could see in them His own image and utter over them the full and final apostolic commission: "As the Father has sent Me, even so send I you."

EMERGENCY takes from our hands in an instant, at a moment's notice, what Experience has been patiently putting into them for many days; just so much, and no more. The lips that have allowed hasty words, or vile, to pass under the breath, will start some day to hear an oath, or worse, escape from them. The hand that has perseveringly prepared itself by the painstaking performance of little tasks will wonder some day to find itself

lifted up, before it knows, upon some mighty undertaking with success.

A BROKEN heart is a sponge for God's Word.

IT is well to have Jesus on the mountain with Moses and Elias, to have Him in the Bible and in the Church; but it is better to have His arm to go down Hermon to your common work, down Hermon to your house and fireside. To awake and find He is with you to-morrow morning, when the ordinary bells ring, and the old knock comes, and the rubs of life that make you say: "O! it's the same dry, humdrum, dead affair as ever." "It is not," says One,

and an arm is in yours before you know it. Elias and Moses are but echoes ; this is Jesus only.

WHERE is one to get where-
with to help another if not
from the healed scars in himself? O
brother, that small temptation thou
thinkest not worth contending against
for the victory will only benefit thy
selfish self, and defeat will make no
difference to anybody, know therein
lies thy only chance ever to help
others. Conquer thy temptation ; it
is a phial of healing for thy younger
brother and for friends thou hast
never seen.

PRAYER is the correspondence
of wedded souls.

TO all who would be Christ's followers this voice of Christ comes ever and anon: "*Rest you a while.*" Every true living thing must have times of stillness. It takes stillness, it takes quiet, to understand, to get good out of joy and sorrow alike. It takes quietness to turn joy into gratitude; and all joy is lost to our lives for a permanent possession which does not end in gratitude, which does not go up at length in thankfulness to God. Gratitude is the guardian angel of joy. It takes quietness, too, to turn sorrow into resignation; and all sorrow is lost to life for a lasting good which does not end in calm, settled, understanding submission. This is why God has given us the privilege of daily prayer; it is the

resting, the recruiting ground of souls.

GOD teaches by experiences. You may have the truth all stored up in the memory, recorded on the page ; but He brings you into the place where you need it—face to face with facts which will not construe without it. But you will not get all the teaching out of the facts to-day. They are only fountains opened, and they will trickle down and give you drink for many days.

THE new birth may be hid ; one may be silent about it for years, as Nicodemus was, as the disciples were before Pentecost.

But when the Spirit comes, one must *speak*. It is one thing to be saved; it is another to bear salvation for others. For each of us there is an utterance the Spirit will give. None can learn it of his brother, none can be content to want it but to his sore loss and peril; it may sound strangely at times, and even seem to offend, but the strangeness is the least part of it; it may serve to attract men to the real miracle—the spectacle that saves—the new man.

THE heart cannot have two homes. It may be only *one* thing that ties you to earth, but that is enough. But *one* unbroken desire, but *one* unsundered object, and all the apparent upward movements of

the soul are but the abortive flight of a bird whose foot is tethered. It may be but a tiny cord that unites you to Heaven—but *one* and a faint heart-throb when you hear the name, or a quick glance when none is near—and all the other businesses of life are but the occupations by the way of the birds that summer with us but are bound for the South.

WHAT is ransom to anybody but a bondsman? It is the labour and the heavy load that throws the inviting power into "Come unto Me." It is the sense of the horrid dark hands that drag us down and level us just when we are going to rise that gives its eloquence and its urgency unto "O wretched man." It

is the terror of awaking one day to an unknown, unannounced dawn, of standing stripped and shivering, confused, petrified before a Presence that is Omniscience, that inspires invocation to the Rock of Ages to open and hide one here and now, hide one for ever from Himself, ay, and from ourselves. O! sweet the joys of earth, fair the outgoings of morning and evening; O! rare the joys of youth and hope and promise; O! high the delights of learning; O! noble the efforts of labour; O! pleasant the loves of home and friendship and fatherland; but never joy so deep, so enduring, so satisfying as the joy, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." No draught to thirsty lips like this, "I have been redeemed."

THE sin of settling down on blessings we have won, instead of sharing them and helping others to win them, never fails to find us out.

THERE is nothing more grateful in the service of Christ than *spontaneity*—nothing more welcome to Himself, nothing more welcome to His servants. To have some service offered, to know of some kind deed done, quite apart from any pressure or appeal or even suggestion—that is so like Jesus, that it is a joy merely to think of it. We are so ready to wait till someone moves, instead of following unbidden the first impulse of our hearts; we are so inclined to act only under

the spur or the whip; we are so ready to criticise instead of helping, that *willingness* is a cardinal virtue indeed.

IF you are seeking to do God's will, you will not be thinking of yourself, how to assert yourself, how to guard yourself. You will not notice things that rouse the selfish spirit into resistance and retaliation. Love is the great remedy for sensitiveness. Not to seek our own—that is the way to escape many wounds.

WHAT is the Kingdom of God? It is the place where the King is, where He reigns—whether in heaven or in our hearts. Wherever anyone does a kind deed, or

speaks a kind word—there is the Kingdom of God. Wherever anyone gives up his own way to please another, for Jesus' sake, there is the Kingdom of God. Wherever anyone lets Jesus have His holy will, wherever anyone tries to think what Jesus would do, there is the Kingdom of God. To come into the Kingdom is just to take Jesus for our Master, to let Jesus take us and make us what He wants us to be.

GOD often makes His children serve by bodily suffering. "They also serve who only *sit* (or *lie*) and wait." They serve more truly, one thinks, at times. For going about *may be* God's will; but sitting still (Ruth iii. 18) and lying down (Ps. xxiii. 2) certainly *is*. Strange

office these midnight priests of His have, watchful with sleeplessness, wakeful with pain, “which *by night* stand in His house” (Ps. cxxxiv. 1). It is no office to seek out; but if it have been appointed you, blessed are ye.

NOW, why does Christ describe the call He gives to come to Himself as a call to a “great feast”? Why does he speak here with unquivering certainty, with perfect assurance? He is conscious in Himself of all that the souls of men can desire. He knows Himself to be the quieter of every longing, the quencher of all thirst, the sum of all satisfaction. In Him all the contents of Godhead have their bodily home; all

who are in Him are in contentment, thoroughly filled, well satisfied. He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with good things. This Soul confronts all human souls—the whole insatiable need, the ceaseless yearning of mankind,—and throwing itself open, cries: “Come, and ye shall find rest.” What infinite adventure, what divine daring!

OBERVE the divine inventiveness of Love. She is never at a loss, never put out, never taken aback. She trusts not to craft nor scheming, and so she is rewarded with a marvellous many-sidedness, an inexhaustible fertility of resource, passing all the utmost triumphs of diplomacy.

LOVE'S house is as large as Love's heart. Never had she a wish to which her chambers did not instantly widen; ay, and of their width give nursery and playground to new wishes.

YOUR powerlessness, honestly felt, is the greatest argument for salvation. The call of God carries with it the power to rise.

EACH of us is not only God's *workman*, but His steward. He has a duty of *distribution* as well as of *accumulation* laid upon him. God expects every man to have *bestowed* so much as well as *laboured* so much before his time comes.

NO one knows what are the voices of Providence to another soul. When trial comes to us, others can say, This will show his power of endurance, his patience, his equal mind. But God and we know more.

IS not the gift of Christ the one and only measure of the love of God?

LET us make peace with our sphere as soon as possible; for only so can we serve Christ. Let us go gladly out and meet the surroundings of our lives, and say, "Christ sent you hail to you, well met." Let us go out and

explore the arena we have got, saying: "Thou canst not be my prison, for Christ is somewhere in 'hee; show me Him."

O GOD, Who Thyself art meekness and lowliness, take pity on our pride and foolishness. Pardon our offences, and create in us a meek and lowly heart, for the honour of Thy holy Name. Amen.

GOD must send famines, or He would never send some of us home. It takes an empty heart, ay, and a hungry mouth, to make home-longings. He has to waken up the North wind in

autumn to turn the swallow's heart southward, and tell her it is time to be going. It is the snowstorm that takes the deer off the hills and brings them in about the homestead. We can see so much after all is over. Hardship is at times a good teacher, but there is an awful agony ere that comes.

WHAT is repentance? It is a change of mind; it is having new thoughts, another heart about all things, but above all about the Author of all, about God. It is the determined resolution, the settled resolve to think His thoughts about things, and walk in His ways. It is the anguish and effort not even in

thought to return to the old places, and repeat the old sins. It is the softening that comes about the heart, the sinking at the knees, the clasping the fair feet of Christ, and covering them with what sweetness a new love can lay upon the lips, and what bitterness an old life can bring to the eyes.

NO, not all in irony did Jesus utter this impassioned appeal for open bosoms, larger hearts, more liberal hands. Nay, but with the emphasis, the authority, and the persuasion of a Life which was itself all largess, of lips which were ever letting loose to every wind with all their breath the immeasurable benediction, "It is more

blessed to give than to receive." Could they but know their reward, the heightened life, the swelling heart, the divine elasticity, the celestial elevation, ever would their feet be on errands of mercy, ever their doors open to the poor. Did they object that there would be no earthly return? Therein lay the very root and ground, the pledge and evidence, the sign and seal, of some transcendent blessing: "Thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee."

L ORD, we do not and we may not know what Thy will for us in days to come may be; but we *do want* to be what Thou wilt make us; we want to

be that, nothing less and nothing more. Amen.

WHAT is asked of us who have souls, here? It is not merely to open to Christ—the willingness to do that is implied already. More than this is wanted. It is stern, dogged work at ourselves that is wanted. Deep digging at our vineyard every day. Resolute, regular, determined labour. It is to carry Christ's word into all the corners and crannies of our life, and that is an endless life-work indeed. For His word will always open new chambers in our soul; always light upon some new well within us. It is not only to lay our whole selves

and services at the feet of the Divine Master, but to make these services more worthy of His having, these selves more meet for His use. It is to be early and late at ourselves, Sabbath and Saturday, week in, week out. It is to cast away what hinders Christ commanding the deepest and the richest of us. It is to read better books, and keep better hours, and make better habits, and turn out better work. It is to strive after that masterpiece of Christ's creation—an entire man made wholly like Him, moved wholly by Him, penetrated and permeated, informed and inspired by His Spirit.

WORK we may, seek and strive, and we are all bidden do this; but in the end it is not our doing. It is not the need we feel of Christ which saves us. It is *Christ*, and He is a gift. If He did not place Himself before us, we could never see Him. He puts Himself in our hands. Unless we can grasp Him there, we shall never grasp Him anywhere. He lies, like treasure, at our feet: if we do not find Him there, we shall never find Him anywhere. He lies, like the pearl, under our eyes: if we do not see Him there, we shall never see Him anywhere.

TO lift another's burden is to have the weight taken from your own. He who shows mercy

nath mercy shown to him. For none can draw near to another but he feels a covert of wings over both. It is God's love that binds us to each other, and the more we yield to the bond, the more we feel God's love.

GOD does all before He asks us to do anything; He redeems before He enjoins; and only the redeemed can truly keep His commandments.

IF the main mark of discipleship lay in our attitude towards our *gifts*, then pride, emulation, depression might be permitted; but the thing that will be asked

of us is our attitude to the *Giver*. And that can come with the smallest possible sphere, the tiniest place conceivable. Throw a pebble into a pool; you will never in this world make the lesser circles meet the wider ones. But you cannot either in this world make the lesser catch a less perfect crown of light, than the larger ones. Into the little, as into the big, the great infinite sky will look with the same loving and approving blue. From the smallest patch of earth you can see the stars.

WHAT child is he to whom the Father giveth stones for bread? Ay, and what child is he who never asks for bread at

all? If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit—to whom?—to them that ask Him. That is the condition of every spiritual gift—it demands constant asking. Other blessings God seems to bestow upon the unthankful and evil; this cannot be so bestowed. For the very essence of it lies in the attitude of the receiving heart—open, susceptible, inviting, yearning.

HAVE you ever considered what a great teacher the sense of wonder is to children? If you get anybody's wonder excited, you can teach him anything. But wonder is most natural to the young,

What freshness, what eagerness, what expectation, what hope we have in childhood! We have not seen everything yet. Like Charity, we believe all things; we are on the outlook for surprises. We are ready to know more. The best things do not yet lie behind us. We have not yet settled into the belief, which makes middle life so often a dead, monotonous level, that nothing more is to be seen. We have not shut ourselves to the persuasion, which turns advancing age so often into a timorous, cramped, grudging thing, that nothing better is to be known.

SILENT prayer is far more sure than vocal prayer. Prayer uttered is only valuable as it is the

outcome of prayer unexpressed. What everyone hears is sadly apt to be lost to God.

LOVE, such as Christ's law speaks of, never asks the question, "Who is my neighbour?" Love's question, if Love asks questions at all, is, "How can I show myself neighbourly?" Love does not inquire, "Whom ought I to help?"—it inquires, "How can I best be a helper?" It does not look narrowly and grudgingly and fearfully round, trying to find out who the others are who may have claims on it. Its eyes are turned inward upon itself, saying, "What will make me more fit to serve?"

IN the meekness and lowliness of Jesus lies great part of His mastery over men ; in meekness and lowliness like those of Jesus lies our rest.

HE who is near the feet of God will let any man go above him, nay, trample upon him, without offence. He is not concerned at what they say of him ; he knows the subject better than anyone else.

WHAT does a "yoke" mean but something for two? It means something to wear with another.

We do not know this so well where horses do most of the work ; though

in ploughing, at least, you seldom see them going singly. But in the south of France, or Germany, or in the East, or in Africa, anywhere indeed but in England, you see the great, broad-browed, mute-eyed, meek-faced, uncomplaining creatures, bound two and two by a great band of wood fastened before the horns, and, in many instances, the yoke is seldom removed. Together the yoke of oxen sleep, together feed, together work. It is this image Christ uses. He calls us to a common yoke with Him, and therefore to a yoke that "is easy." For divine love, sharing our life, is a principle which yields without severance and holds without force. Christ made this yoke, He gives it, wears it with us. It is not force of example merely, or that fortified by

sympathy ; there is over and above that a certain union of interests, nay, of natures, between us and Him.

Through being with Him, we grow like Him ; nay, we grow one with Him ; His character, His strength, become ours.

FRIENDS electrify each other ; there is a dulling down when they part.

A TENDER heart with wounds is better than woodenness without.

THE Lord's goodness surrounds us at every moment. I walk through it almost with difficulty, as through thick grass and flowers.

CHILDREN have the effect on your spirit that morning air has on your body. There is no exhaustion in them; they are charged with life and health and sunshine.

THERE is something very strange to me in a child's voice. It is like the sound of a better life and a better land, so simple and pure. Children do more for us in our hours of joy than we know: Browning teaches, in "Jochanan Hakkadosh," I think, how much they may do in an hour of sorrow.

THEY used to say that old blood could be made young by pouring young blood in. I think

they meant that children, either natural or spiritual, were the grand restorers.

THE possession of a child of one's own opens up the possibility of an entirely new world of experience, and therefore of an entirely fresh revelation of the First Author and Supreme Object of all experience. I think I have told you before what my first thought was when I caught sight of a little living, moving, grumbling thing, mouthing its fingers and rubbing its fists in its eyes, on the floor before the fire. It was as if the Father in Heaven had fairly (if it is not irreverent to say so) shaken hands, offered me His hand, and said, "Thou art forgiven."

I THINK I would get cured of the disease of unsatisfied desire if I saw a few souls won to Christ through me.

ONE yearns to unite the deepest revelry of soul in spiritual things with the clearest mind to report upon them to others—and especially to men in need.

I AM trying to watch and pray hour by hour, but it is no easier to learn to do that than it was eighteen hundred years ago. The second hour is as difficult as the first; and I have learned to fear that the third may be the hardest of all; and one just wakens to find the Master is

on foot once more, and needs watching with no longer.

THE artist is known by his omissions as much as by what he includes.

“WE shall meet where death shall not dissever.” I have just read these words at the head of one of Knox’s letters. He has a way of writing something of that sort at the top of the page—a prayer or a promise—and, like everything he does, it is as full of beauty as meaning. His life is only another revelation of how rich their lives are made who are truly God’s people—how thoughtful and sympathetic and

suggestive. One learns on every page how real goodness deepens a man's humanity every way.

THE ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is like the dust from flowers in bloom. It insinuates and instils. The meek man is not without opinions, or a stranger to enterprise. He does not live in an untroubled sphere, but he has no desire to see his opinion imposed on any. Children find out the meek ; for meekness is the childhood of the soul. Haughty men are never young, the meek never grow old. Most of us have known some. The young are warmed by them, the middle-aged soothed, the old supported.

Meek hearts live forever : they

are the stock of an immortal tree. They inherit lives that live after them, they are spiritual children. David says, "God is meek": Christ says, "I am meek." The Holy Spirit's emblem is a dove. The dove comes when you do not stir it. Ask gently in silent prayer. He came thus to Christ, and will to you when kneeling and broken down. Thou, who art Thyself meek and lowly, take pity and create in us Thy meekness.

IT is pleasant in beginnings (household no less than those of a higher kind) that you can for a time at least refuse everything that is not beautiful or that has not a beautiful association. Nothing enriches a life like rich surroundings ;

and we have scarcely a book, picture, or piece of furniture which does not call up the affection, or at least the *idea*, of a friend. Everything we have is either a memory or a memento of someone dear to us; so that, when the friends themselves have visited us, certain parts of the house stand out for a little afterwards like the traces of phosphorescence in the dark.

GRACE or favour (in the Old Testament) means the immense honour—and sometimes even outward beauty—which God's goodness confers on a man. It refers to the unspeakable ennoblement of the whole of human nature by its contact with God. So it may come to mean

as in Psalm xc.) the sort of "beauty" or "glory" (in the New Testament) which passes upon Christians from the presence of their Master, clothing them with radiance, winningness, and power.

NOW, the sun is strong, and I get my strength for arm and limb from him: but for its strength my heart travels to God and to home; for he who is near Christ is near the hearth-fire.

THE rarest Christian graces, you can almost see them springing up day by day—as you fancy you hear the grass grow in hot climates after rain—marked with

the high healthy colour and the dew of youth. Tears are too large for the little eyes. There (in that little believer) is one of the fruits of the Spirit, one of the first, finest, and most inimitable of them all—care for another soul; and all of a night's growth.

THE work begins to exert an indescribable fascination over the worker; infinite openings suggest themselves as the conversation goes on: he is guided to the right word by a sure instinct; there springs up in him unconsciously that deft and delicate touch which in other things we call "tact": he learns to give the little ones less pain, to be faithful and to be gentle; he finds not two things,

but only different ways of one. Meantime his own faith has helps unheard of; the realities of Eternity take living shape and form: he gains confirmation of his own experience in that which is passing under his eyes: he sees the thing going on "outside of himself," independently of anything he may say or do; it is *there*, a great power, a supernatural influence. Another is there who worketh like the wind, which bloweth where it listeth. He feels as those three disciples must have felt whom Christ took in with Him alone to the sick-room and the chamber of death, not to say anything or do anything or even lend a helping hand, but simply to keep as still as possible and not interrupt Him at His wonder-working, as it went on in their very presence.

ONLY hearts that do not live
 in themselves know what life
 is. *Nur Herzen die ausser sich leben
 haben Erlebnisse.*

IT is good for us to know that some
 whose studies lead them into
 strange places, and into utterances
 about God's revelation so unlike
 what we have been accustomed to and
 may think ourselves still bound by
 reason as well as tradition to believe,
 are at heart rooted and grounded in
 the very faith and love from which we
 draw our lives. Every day I live I
 hear, louder and more loud, that
 saying of our Lord—"Judge not,
 that ye be not judged." What a
 word that is for disciples !

I CAN conceive of no more perfect or quaint object on a study table than the little brown bookie [a reproduction of an old Latin copy of À Kempis] which delights one every time he lifts his eye. I am sorry I have got so little hitherto from it nwardly, chiefly, I suppose, because the quiet from which it came, and to which it points, has been so little sought or gained in my life. It always seems to me that the À Kempis-Keble order of living leans too much to the mere *self-denying* side of Christianity, making it indifferent what sphere you fill or whereunto you attain; whereas our Lord says indeed, "Lose your life," but "Lose it only to gain it"; not "Lose it here and gain it hereafter," but "Lose it here and gain it here": Get from me

that life for which I seized you—that self which *can do all things* through Him that giveth it power. However, that is of opinion.

Yet even the *title* of the little book contains for me, and I suppose for all of us, a truth excelling all attainment. “To copy Christ”—that seems to be Christianity as none has hitherto been Christian. If we could sing the “*προωρώμην τὸν Κύριόν μου διαπαντός,*” perhaps we should come nearer the close of the canticle: “*ὅτι ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἐστὶν ἵνα μὴ σαλευθῶ.*”

IT is for God's children John wrote that golden line, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” To confess that is to be forgiven. To walk in the light and to bring everything before Him into the

light, that is to have the only perfect communion with each other ; that is to be cleansed from all sin. May we get the secret of forgiveness and know to give it to others.

ABUSES are like weeds : they need only toleration to spread and grow. Reforms are tender plants : they flourish only on stubborn effort, on broken clods of patient toil, on showers of secret tears, on the irresistible sunlight of the Almighty's smile.

I SUPPOSE that, or something like it, was the faith, or rather mental substitute for faith, he [Byron] went on living on, or trying to live—what is commonly called Pantheism—all that is left when one casts

away, or loses, or rather has never possessed, the excellency of the knowledge of a personal God in Christ. I have seen many who have lost all hope because they have lost that faith. That seems to be the reason why so many have no light on what lies beyond this life; which only comes with the sure grasp—sure and certain, though trembling—of the Father's hand here and now. And it is the craving of the heart after immortality, at least after a hope for others in the hereafter, if not at first for themselves, which has led many back to the belief in a personal God.

BUT how one ought to be living, if all he believes—or any of it—is true ! Even with a little separate

gold strand of one's own in the great rope which goes for us through the veil, how little and how seldom the heart is sensibly tugged hither, how little and how seldom it hears the tiniest cracking of a thread or root (for they are roots too, and they grow if they are not cut, and even when they are) which holds him to earth and sense and time!

WHAT is the Bible but a collection of letters from our great Friend? You know what a friend's letter is. With what eagerness you open it, with what care you scan every line of it! How it delights you to find himself in his letter, to point to this, and this, and say, "So like him!" How you read it and

re-read it, and keep it in the safest, most sacred place!

If you have any plan already, any rule or course of reading, keep to it. But in any case, have a Bible of your own, and have one Bible; bring the one you use in your room to church and meeting. Do not leave your Bible behind either at church or home, if you can help it. I have seldom seen an outstanding Christian man who did not prefer his own Bible to any other.

DO you ask, how much ought one to read at a time? A chapter is the ordinary, and it is a safe advice. But I should rather say—Read on until you reach a verse where, if it be night-time, you can lay your head right down

as on a pillow ; or where, if it be morning, you can plant your foot as on a rock, and stop there. Wait till you come to a word which will bear the day's burden—its sin, sorrow, struggle, duty, joy, and there let your whole weight lean.

IF Bible-reading is like getting your friend's letter, then prayer is like a visit from your friend. If I know my friend and I are soon to meet, how glad I am to think of the moments we shall spend together ! How I try to make the most of them ! I go over in my mind all that has happened since we last met ; I note what I have to tell him ; I put down the questions I wish to ask him. There are books

I have been reading or am going to read ; people I have been seeing or am hoping to see ; things I have been doing or am trying to do. Now, is there any preparation of that kind before we pray ? Might we not at least think an instant or two before we kneel, and go over what we have to say ?

SING to Christ when you sing.

Think of Him and He will be in the psalm. That is the way to forget others ; speak out every word to Him. How it helps the minister to preach when everybody tries to sing !

Again, *pray to Christ when you pray.* Let me ask how you accompany the minister when he prays ? If you can, you ought to follow

every word in thought, under your breath. It is not difficult if you try; it becomes a habit, like everything else. If you cannot do that, then let your whole heart go with the sense of what the minister says. If not, at least add an Amen in your heart when the prayer comes near you. When absent friends are prayed for, look up in fancy at the face of your absent friend, or breathe his name. How differently a minister prays when he feels that the whole heart of the congregation is going forth with him as one man! Prize especially the moments of silent prayer after the benediction; prolong them, do not restrain prayer; put the sermon into a petition. At no time should the heart be better prepared than just then.

IF you are not sure about anything, *shun* it. There is no true cleaving without shrinking. Every Christian has a shrinking side to his life: there are some things he utterly loathes, is heartily and wholesomely afraid of, cannot think of without a shudder. There is no fear but that this will come if you keep near Christ.

HOW good it is to hail pilgrims on the great journey even for an hour by the way! The sound of their "tramp, tramp" quickens one's own tread and makes one take in his knapsack-strap one hole further.

I THINK less and less of the outward marks and turnings in life; we can hardly read the record at all until the ink is very pale. Perhaps even then it would be better if we left that—the reading of it—to the Editor, and only opened hopefully and wrote resolutely upon the next page.

IF we be in Christ, then we are in a new world, and all things must be becoming new to us. Now, tell me, was there more light on God's world when you woke up this morning than when you woke a year ago? Or were the daily duties easier and delightfuller to-day than they were last week? Then you are in Christ.

FOR to those in Christ all things are not only new, but they are growing continually newer. In the old world, and with the old man, it is just the other way. Things are always getting older, until life gets to be an insufferable burden, a dreary round, a wretched repetition, and we see backs bent with nothing but pure sorrow, and heads white with none other sickness than vexation of spirit, and men brought to the grave because life was too wearisome, and time too intolerable, and existence too aimless and stale, to be supported any longer. But in the new world, and with the new man, the whole is reversed; and the new cry ever waxes more frequent and more loud,

"Look, and look again, how the old is passing, how the new is coming, how things are getting new." Every day more of the old is weeded out, more of the new is coming in. Life is "fresher and freer" and fuller of promise. There are new discoveries of the Father's love, new revelations of Christ's grace, new experiences of the Spirit's comfort. Life becomes interesting, and entertaining, and significant, and splendid, and grand beyond belief. What views of life Christ's world contains; what heavens of expansion overarch it; what hills of attainment are reared upon it; what distances of outlook are discernible from it! Yourself, Christ, God — what thoughts about them all you could never have conceived

before ! History, Time, Eternity—
 what feelings they stir in you, you
 never could have felt before ! Purpose,
 Progress, Achievement—what
 mighty motions of the will they
 produce !

O FOR love to be as gracious
 to another as one is to
 oneself—to put the same favour-
 able interpretation upon their acts,
 to make the same liberal allowance
 for opinions ; to choose among
 many the more generous motives ;
 to be as gentle of the living as of
 the dead — as kind toward the
 present as toward the absent—as
 jealous of to-day as one is wistful
 about yesterday.

WHEREVER love has been,
 there joy will surely be. Do
 the act, and the feeling will come.
 Love anything, anyone, and joy
 will follow. You never loved but
 it brought you happiness. The
 happiest hour in your life is the
 hour when you loved most.

SOME have the great grace
 given them of late years to
 go in and out, to lie down and
 rise up, always staff in hand, like
 apostles on pilgrimage—always with
 loins girt, never with more in the
 purse than will carry them one
 stage on, never with more in their
 wardrobe than the daily wear. Like
 Wesley, if they are suddenly taken,
 they have left no engagements un-

fulfilled, they have no letters to answer, or matters to arrange. The children they leave cannot but talk about them, as if they had just been seen off on some happy excursion ; no farewells to say, no tears to be shed ; nothing but to go after them in a day or two.

THE supreme impulse of all in a man's life comes sometimes with the simple resolve just at last to let something go.

PERHAPS there are comforts and compensations that one who has not suffered knows nothing of—like the lamps that nobody sees till the tunnel comes.

N OBLE examples are not enough to live upon: it needs the same grace which produced them to make their impress durable.

H ERE again I am in the old place — not too changed, thank God, but that I can still feel something of the old man. One does change, I find, more than one thought he could when he had only been through one or two periods of life; but not so much as to shake his confidence in that centre of all certainties—the soul; which means one's own soul, for that is the only soul one knows. And yet, there again I must distinguish, for the only self worth having and worth keeping, or worth hoping to have more of, is

the second self, the new man, and that seems strangely slow in coming or in growing. Do you know, I think sometimes—and the more I try to think of it the more it appears to me certain—that the beginnings of that second life lie very far back, farther than one can at times see. Perhaps the new birth admits of that, nay, means it. Only, along with that, one holds ever more tightly to the truth of an entire change, of a complete new creation; at least I see painful cause to draw the line for myself ever sharper and sharper between the new and the old.

AND underneath us everywhere, deeper than the darkness of Death and the emptiness of the grave.

are those everlasting arms. The dead make no weight in His arms; they do not toss and fret, and give Him trouble as we do. Their deaths are precious, for then He gets them all to Himself, feels the full weight of them, and they lie still in His arms.

GOD be praised for the prospect of a life which shall terminate this painful strait betwixt the earlier joys which were so good and the later joys which would be perfect if one did not feel sometimes as if they were pushing the earlier out of reach. Such a feud has the heart with the memory. God speed the hour when Time shall have struck its last misleading and defrauding chime, and

we shall have our best at once and forever!

HEAVEN — the land where
there are no two hemi-
spheres, but only one infinite circle
of united love.

DETERMINATION

"C'est bien puissant le 'je veux' de la Volonté."
EUGÉNIE DE GUÉRIN.

A VACANT hour ! a wintry day !
Green fields ! a sky of ashen gray !
A horse there on the towing way
 Straining along ;
Not worth so many words, you say ?
 'Tis worth a song.

Ho ! brother in the traces there,
With starting thews and steaming hair,
How bravely dost thou forward fare
 Up the canal.
Thy load says, " Further if you dare " ;
 Thou say'st, " I shall."

O heart upon life's towing road,
With cares that drag, and fears that goad
Tug on, toil on, 'tis well bestowed,
 This strife and strain,
One more mile onward with thy load,
 Is surely gain.

IN AMOREM

“ Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt : every one shall be salted with fire.”—MARK ix. 49.

WHEN thy cup is at the brim,
And thine eyes for gladness swim ;
When thy darkest doubt is stilled,
And thy dearest hope fulfilled ;
When joy is heaped and cannot higher—
Ask the baptism of fire.

When the lips that thou dost love
To their sweetest utterance move,
When the soul, with longing sore,
Knows it does not long for more,
When thou hast thy heart's desire—
Ask the baptism of fire.

FLUX

THEY change, all change, they perish
evermore ;
The new is fairer than the old before ;
They change, all change, and shall not
man the more ?

They change, all change, they perish
nevermore ;

This ceaseless death is glory's noiseless
door ;

They change, all change, and shall not
man the more ?

They change, all change, He smileth as of
yore ;

With Him no now, no after, no before ;

He changeth not, and shall not man the
more ?

They change, all change, unknowing o'er
and o'er ;

We know their changes—naught is as of
yore ;

They change, all change, and shall not
man the more ?

They change, all change ; Him changeless
we adore,

And smile His smile in the face of the dark
before ;

We change, all change, immortal all the
more.

IN THE DARK

DEATH doth make us draw together,
 Like weary birds in the wild weather,
 Till we scarcely know
 The once dread difference of feather
 We felt so much a little ago.

Death wins us from our weekday dress ;
 We can't do common things ; life seems
 less ;
 There has past away
 That blessed use of littleness
 We live in, day by day.

What cause for quarrelling (he speaks true),
 Or talking loudly, as if we knew?
 All that man saith
 Hath been said to him long since. Very
 few
 Have been found to answer Death.

Sit still together. The sunbeams pour
 In on us, past the swinging door ;
 And, under our breath,
 Say : Life's not less, the Immortal's more—
 Be kind to us, Death !

A HIGHLAND FUNERAL.

" Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations."

ONCE more we meet in the old retreat,
 The home roof over us once again ;
 But the old walls wake to the bearers'
 feet,
 And the old rooms sob with the mourners'
 train—
 'Tis the old, old home again,
 But the old dwellers will not remain.

So we bear her out to the mountain side,
 For the hills are an older sort of home,
 And better, they say, will the mountains
 bide
 And the heath thatch over the dark peat
 loam.
 Oh ! this is an older home,
 Where the feet of her childhood used to
 roam.

The hills rise round us as we rise,
 As they rose to Him who gave them birth
 Creation's dawn-look in their eyes,
 And their witness-feet fixt fast in earth,

Attesting as at birth,
 Till our thoughts are spurred to the
 heaven's far-spanning girth ;

His heaven whose home is everywhere,
 And all within His ken is home,
 Who sleeps with the dust we scatter here,
 Who sleeps not, over that crystal dome,
 Where she is awake and at home,
 Whither her spirit in living slowly clomb.

So we aye shall meet in an old retreat,
 A home-roof over us evermore,
 One house to the lords whose rest is sweet,
 And the servants busy about the door,
 One dwelling-place evermore,
 In whose going and coming we rest and
 rejoice and adore.

ON THE MARCH

PSALM CX.

WE are going home,
 We are almost there,
 No more to roam,
 Not anywhere.

We are going home,
 The house in view ;
 That last hill's clomb,
 This will be too.
 We are going home,
 Convoyed by love ;
 Out of the womb
 Of morn above,
 Like dew, so thick,
 So fresh, like dew,
 We are dropping quick,
 We are sparkling new,
 Yeoman the youthfullest
 E'er drew sword,
 Bowmen the truthfullest
 Ever warred,
 All thy young soldiers
 With one accord
 Are coming, are coming
 To Thee, O Lord,
 Garlanded feast-like,
 Helms concealed,
 Filleted priest-like,
 Stole upon shield,
 Fail not nor falter,
 Once offered to Thee ;

Thou art the altar,
Sacrifice we,
Bound to the horns by
Love's own cord,
Catching the kindling
Look of the Lord,
Ready to leap up
At His word.
Devoted, desirous,
Lord, we yearn,
Fire us, inspire us,
Till we burn !
Quick ! the home rises
Clear in view ;
Shine we, sparkle we,
Fire and dew,
Kindled in common,
Together poured,
Coming and coming
To Thee, O Lord,
Spotless and numberless.
Lord, we come,
Countless and cumberless,
And almost home.

DEO QUI DAT VICTORIAM

LORD, I thank Thee who hast wounded
for the mercy that abounded,
For the multitudinous mercy flowing for-
ward like a sea,
For the deeps that, rolling o'er me, arched
into an arm that bore me,
For the thunder-step of time that woke
Thy peace, eternity.

And I thank Thee that the thunder never
woke one word of wonder,
Only hushed the murmurous thought and
drove rebellion far away ;
That the wrath revealed outside me showed
a rest where I might hide me,
Till the inward clouds-rejoined the outer
darkness black as they.

Therefore Thee I praise for ever, merciful
Taker, mighty Giver,
Taking but to give, and giving none but
Thou to take away ;
And if darker clouds encrust Thee, though
Thou slay me, I will trust Thee.
For Thy hurt is simple healing, and Thy
darkness simple day.

IN MEMORIAM, J. F. EWING

ONE more who made this earthly pilgrimage
An arduous mountain climb, a stubborn fight,
Fought till the nightfall ! Yet it was not night
That fell, what time a voice cried : " Cease to fight
My warfare ; enter on my heritage " ;
Nay, but full daybreak, " day most calm, most bright,"
Boundless and endless, rich with all delight
That heart can hunger for or mind can gauge.
One more at Life's clear fountain drinks his fill,
And feasts his eyes out on the Face divine ;
One more ascends into His holy hill,
Beholds His beauty, worships at His shrine,
Brother, let Christ call me too, when He will,
If only my freed spirit be with thine.

IN MEMORIAM, W. G. ELMSLIE

DEAR friend—for I may call thee thus;
the name

Will not sound strangely where thou art—
dear friend,

Whom here I honoured with the cordial
bend

The boy's heart gives the student grown to
fame.

"Friend," that first night I saw these blue
eyes flame,

And heard these lips their rapid arrows
send,

Swift to attack but swifter to defend,

"Friend," said my heart: to-night it says
the same.

Dear friend, who seest the truth now
through no glass,

Who readest now no Scripture but the
Word,

Who ridest now to triumph, not to fight,

Would that my soul one day to thine might
pass,

Would I might be for ever with the Lord,

Changing this darkness for that light or
light.

GOD'S NURSERY

I WAS in God's nursery to-night as the
evening was getting dim,
And I sat with God's children, and they
were talking of Him ;
And another Child was with them, though
Him I could not see,
They say that God has an Elder Son, I
think it was He.
It was bedtime before I was there, and all
was done for the day,
And the children were going to bed, but
first they were going to pray ;
And that strange Child who was with them
the other children led,
But He did not say " Let us pray," but He
went on talking instead.
" Father," He said, first of all : though I
could not see for the gloom,
Yet the instant He said it I felt there was
someone else in the room ;
And the room itself must have grown in a
very little space ;
For the Child called to Father in heaven,
and heaven is a far-away place.
But oh ! what an echo was left by that one
single sound,

It crept into every corner and wandered
round and round,
The very air felt holy wherever the echo
came,
Cried the children, "Oh ! that it ever were
so. Hallowed be that name !"
With that they smoothed their dresses, the
frocks their Father had given,
Marked with His name and made to be
kept clean for Father in heaven ;
They seemed to prepare for a feast, though
everybody was dumb :
When all was ready I heard, " Now may
Thy kingdom come.
And then did they talk of a playground?
or what were they speaking about ?
A place for spending days in, for running
in and out :
But might it be under His eye like one
somewhere else they had seen,
Strong and sheltered and safe, but pleasant
and wide and green.
Wherever He wished it to be, they would
play in it under His eye,
They would not have two playgrounds,
one on earth and one for the
sky ;

The same would do for both, and so the
word was given,

"Let us do what our Father likes
on earth as they do it in
heaven."

And was it hunger now these little hearts
perplexed?

Though it was not long since last meal-
time nor far to the next,

For fathers lay by for the year, mothers
lay in for the week,

But 'tis only of the little each day that the
children speak.

A little makes them hungry, a little
satisfies:

So "Give us to-day our daily bread," was
one of the children's cries.

And then a rustling of ravens, that after
the sower run—

No more noise than the lilies make when
they drink in the sun;

So each with a piece in his fingers, the
children were put to bed,

But first there came a meeting of lips, and
little voices said,

'We have kissed with one another, kiss
us, our Father in heaven,

We have forgiven each other, we want to
be forgiven."

And then I heard the sweetest sound any
on earth can hear,

A face hung over each little head, coming
quite close and near,

Leaving a rose on either cheek, and either
eyelid wet,

And the mouth of God and the mouth of
the little children met.

But, when the face was lifted, there was
something clasped them still—

"Surely it will not lead us wrong but rescue
us from ill."

Then came low regular breathings like
footsteps dropped in a dream,

Led past every perilous place, lifted at
every stream ;—

But the things they said in their sleep
were the strangest things of all,

Angels round them, heaven opened over
them, words let fall.

The feast had come His hand had prepared,
His brightness made it shine,

And "The kingdom, the power, and the
glory," said the children, "all are
Thine."

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